

43. (New) A method for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

receiving a request from a user reflecting a travel itinerary, wherein the request includes information identifying an originating location and a destination;

analyzing the travel itinerary to determine a set of alternative itineraries comparable to the travel itinerary specified in the request based on selected rules associated with travel, wherein the analyzing step further includes identifying any intermediate locations in a route between the originating location and a destination and at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination that is different than the originating location or destination included in the request;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Subject to the approval of the Examiner, please amend Figures 3 and 6 as indicated in the attached request for drawing change.

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated January 24, 2001, the Examiner objected to Figure 3 for minor informalities; objected to Figure 6 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5); objected to the specification for minor informalities; rejected claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 20, 21, 23, 24, 31, 32, 35 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ahlstrom et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,862,357); rejected

claims 3-8, 14-19 and 25-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ahlstrom et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,862,357) in view of DeLorme et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,948,040); and rejected claims 11, 22, 33 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ahlstrom et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,862,357) in view of Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,897,620).

By this amendment, Applicants have proposed drawing changes and amended the specification to address the Examiner's objections. Applicants have also cancelled claims 9, 20 and 31 and amended claims 1, 4, 5, 10-12, 15, 16, 21-23, 26-30 and 32-36 to address the Examiner's rejections. Applicants have also added new claims 37-43 to point out various features of Applicants' invention.

In view of these amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's objections to the drawings and specification and the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

Regarding the objection to the drawings, Applicants propose to amend Figure 3 by replacing reference number "336" to "335". The proposed change to Fig. 3 will correct the discrepancy between element "336," as illustrated within Server C 330, and element "335" as shown within client 340. Applicants further propose to amend Figure 6 by replacing reference number "605" with "201". The proposed change to Fig. 6 will correlate mislabeled element "605" to user's request "201," as indicated in Applicants' specification on page 14, lines 13-16. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request approval of the changes set forth in the attached Request for Approval of Drawing Change.

Regarding the objections to the specification, the changes made to the specification by this amendment correct the deficiencies noted by the Examiner on page 3, paragraph 5 of the

Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicants have amended this claim to include the recitations of canceled claim 9. Therefore, the rejection associated with claim 9 corresponds to claim 1 and will be addressed accordingly.

Regarding claims 1 and 9, the Examiner argued that Ahlstrom et al. teaches all of the recitations of these claims (Office Action, paper no. 8, page 4, lines 9-20 and page 6, lines 1-4). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Ahlstrom et al.

Ahlstrom et al. teaches a computer reservation system that allows a local computer to input starting and destination locations, as well as intermediate stops. The system analyzes the locations and intermediate stops to determine scores for flight/fare alternatives associated with the locations. The analysis is performed by collecting flight information for city pairs included in the locations and stops provided by the local computer, preferably starting with the last city pair. Once all of the information is collected for each city pair, the flight information is analyzed in accordance with a travel policy stored at the local computer system to determine the best alternatives for each travel leg associated with a city pair.

Applicants claimed invention is distinguishable from Ahlstrom et al. because in that reference, intermediate stops are selected by the operator of the reservation system. In contrast, Applicants claimed invention identifies any intermediate locations in a route between the originating location and a destination included in the request while analyzing the travel itinerary.

A user is not involved in determining the intermediate locations. The savings discover server performs these functions by analyzing the information provided in the request, namely the origination and destination locations.

Accordingly, Ahlstrom et al. fails to teach all of the limitations of claim 1, and Applicants request that the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

Claim 12 is drawn to a computer readable medium containing instructions executable on a computer. The instructions are executable to perform the method described above with reference to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Claims 23 and 36 are drawn to an apparatus for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives. The apparatus includes elements that perform functions similar to the process steps described above with reference to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Regarding claim 2, the Examiner argued that Ahlstrom et al. teaches a report that includes the requested travel itinerary, the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary and the difference between values of for the travel itinerary in the request and each of the alternative itineraries. (Office Action, paper no. 8, page 5, lines 4-14). Applicants disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Ahlstrom et al.

Ahlstrom et al. teaches presenting alternative structures for each city pair, not a plurality of alternative itineraries as recited in claim 2. The alternative structures that are scored and sorted are associated with the city pairs that are analyzed within an itinerary. In contrast, Applicants' claimed invention requires the report to include not only the value for the itinerary included in the request, but also the value for each alternative. Ahlstrom et al. merely provides sorted information for structures within a single itinerary. This is not the same as the invention recited in claim 2.

Additionally, the Examiner argued that the value of a traveler's time is used to readjust scores and ranking of the alternative itineraries. Applicants disagree. The city pair structures in Ahlstrom et al. are adjusted, not the itineraries. Moreover, the "value" that is displayed is the dollar value of the fares associated with the city pair structure (column 10, lines 28-31).

Accordingly, the temporal value associated with a traveler that is used to adjust the scores for the alternative structures are not displayed as alleged by the Examiner. The invention recited in claim 2 requires not only the values for each itinerary to be displayed, including the alternative itineraries, but also the difference in value between each of the alternative itineraries and the itinerary specified in the original request. These features are not taught by Ahlstrom et al.

Accordingly, Ahlstrom et al. fails to teach each and every recitation of claim 2 and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

Claim 13 is drawn to a computer readable medium containing instructions executable on a computer. The instructions are executable to perform the method described above with reference to claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 2.

Claim 24 is drawn to an apparatus for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives. The apparatus includes elements that perform functions similar to the process steps described above with reference to claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 24 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 2.

Regarding claim 10, the Examiner argued that Ahlstrom et al. teaches sorting and scoring travel itineraries in accordance with a predetermined travel policy, and that "travel packages" would be found using the sorting and scoring method described in Ahlstrom et al. Applicants

disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Ahlstrom et al. for at least a couple of reasons. First, Ahlstrom et al. teaches scoring and sorting alternative structures associated with city pairs of a single itinerary, not travel "itineraries" as alleged by the Examiner. And Second, Ahlstrom et al. does not teach locating travel packages that are pre-configured packages associated with prior negotiations between traders and providers of travel resources, as recited in claim 10.

Accordingly, Ahlstrom et al. fails to teach each and every recitation of claim 10 and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

Claim 21 is drawn to a computer readable medium containing instructions executable on a computer. The instructions are executable to perform the method described above with reference to claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 21 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 10.

Claim 32 is drawn to an apparatus for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives. The apparatus includes elements that perform functions similar to the process steps described above with reference to claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 32 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 10.

Dependent claims 3-8, 14-19 and 25-30 are deemed allowable for at least the reasons set forth above for their respective base claims. Furthermore, DeLorme et al. does not teach identifying alternate itineraries based on a travel request, as recited in these claims. The system described in Delorme et al. allows a user to specify a travel route including waypoints and points of interest located within a region of interest along the specified route. However, Delorme et al. does not teach identifying alternative locations without user input, as described in Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, Delorme et al. and Ahlstrom et al., alone or in combination, fail

to teach the recitations of claims 3-8, 14-19 and 25-30 and Applicants request that the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 11, the Examiner implicitly alleged that Ahlstrom et al. does not teach the price-to-beat features recited in claim 11. The Examiner relied upon Walker et al. to teach the features missing from Ahlstrom et al. The Examiner alleged that the ability for Walker et al. to request and produce a reserved airline ticket associated with a user's request is synonymous with the price-to-beat features recited in claim 11. Applicants disagree.

Claim 11 requires, *inter alia*, sending at least one price-to-beat request to a plurality of service providers, receiving responses from these providers that include information on travel itineraries, reconfiguring the values of the travel itinerary specified in the requests and the values for each of the alternative itineraries based on the responses from the service providers and generating a report based on the analysis, determination and reconfiguration. These features of claim 11 enable Applicants' invention to initiate a bid contest between a plurality of service providers to match or beat the requirements set forth in the request and allow the values of itineraries already computed to be adjusted based on responses by the service providers before a report is generated. Walker et al., on the other hand, merely checks to see if airlines may match specifications associated with a flight requested by a user. A travel agent system provides a user with information on an available flight that best matches the user's specifications described in the request. Walker et al. does not teach the reconfiguration of itineraries already computed based on a price-to-beat request and generating a report based on the reconfiguration, as recited in claim 11.

Accordingly, Ahlstrom et al. and Walker et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the invention recited in claim 11 and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Claim 22 is drawn to a computer readable medium containing instructions executable on a computer. The instructions are executable to perform the method described above with reference to claim 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 is patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 11.

Claims 33 and 34 are drawn to an apparatus for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives. The apparatus includes elements that perform functions similar to the process steps described above with reference to claim 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 33 and 34 are patentable for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 11.

Dependent claims 37-42 are deemed allowable for at least the reasons set forth above for their respective base claims. Additionally, Ahlstrom et al., Walker et al. and DeLorme et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest a report including the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary, and a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries, as recited in claims 37, 39 and 41. Furthermore, Ahlstrom et al., Walker et al. and DeLorme et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest a report that is produced geographically on a map, wherein the map includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, at least one of the alternative itineraries and the value for each travel itinerary included in the map, as recited in claim 38, 40 and 42.

Regarding new claim 43, Ahlstrom et al., Walker et al. and DeLorme et al., alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest, among other things, identifying any intermediate locations in a route between the originating location and a destination and at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination that is different than the originating location or destination included in the request, as recited in claim 43.


In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: 
Joseph E. Palys
Reg. No. 46,508